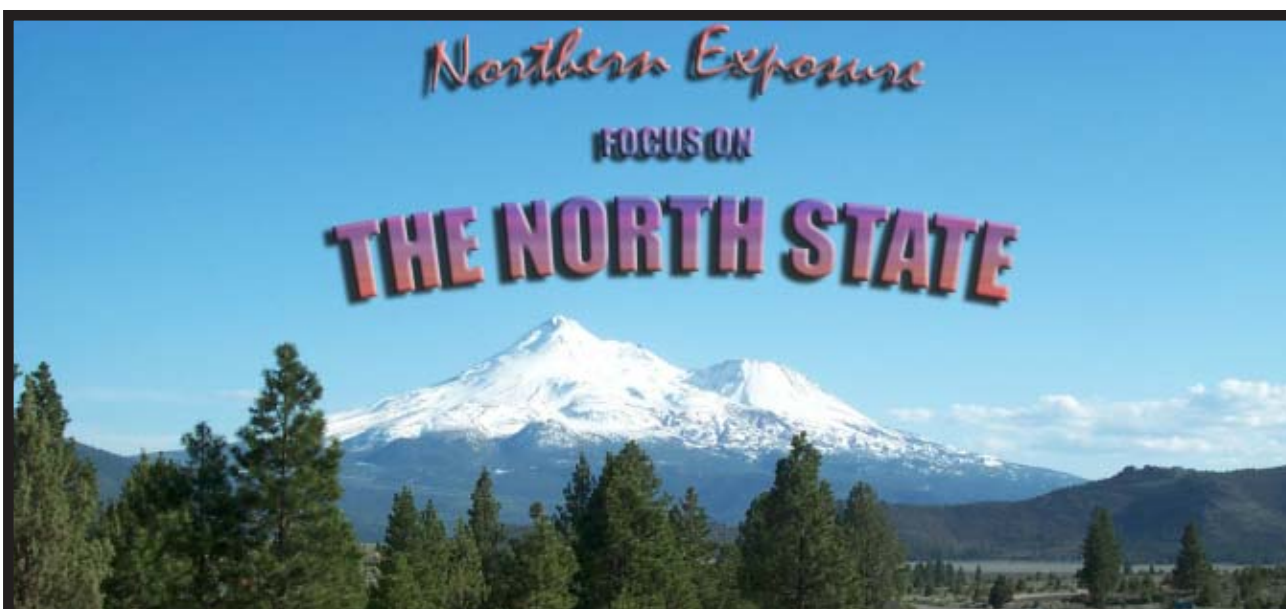


CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS in **California**

United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Davis, California



**Update on EWP
in the Klamath Basin**

See Page 6

Plus

**16 Other
Great Stories from Area 1**

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LEFT

On June 15, Western Shasta RCD Office Manager **Mary Shroeder** and Director **Stuart Gray** received a \$96,000.00 check from Secretary of Agriculture **Ann Veneman** at the Redding Airport. The funds are a grant to the RCD to construct local fuel breaks around communities in Shasta County.



ABOVE

Supporters celebrate Central Sacramento Valley RC&D kickoff in Orland. **See Story on page 16**

BELOW

Trinity and Ore-Cal RC&Ds win USDA Honor Award. **See Story on Page 5**



ABOVE

In May, with more than 170,000 acres of farmland in the Klamath Basin dry and unprotected by vegetation, residents faced the looming threats of severe wind erosion and catastrophic dust storms. NRCS responded to these threats by providing \$2 million in cost-share funding for cover crops through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program.

BELOW

On June 21, Lava Beds and Butte Valley RCD Director Mike Byrne (left) personally delivered the first EWP check in California to John Bowen, a participating Klamath Basin farmer.



Questions, comments, and contributions may be forwarded to:
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CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS STAFF

SEPTEMBER 2001

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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Dear Conservation Colleagues:

I am pleased to present this Current Developments highlighting Area 1 and their many initiatives and successes in 2001. This is the final issue of a series focusing on each of California's NRCS Areas.

These accounts—and the numbers compiled in Performance & Results Measurement System for our annual report—tell many stories. They tell the story of innovative ranchers working with us to turn their ranches into sustainable ecological systems. They tell the story of conservationists teaching people—from students to producers to legislators—the importance and methods of protecting natural resources. They tell the story of resources “finding a function that suits their native abilities”—as proposed by Hugh Hammond Bennett 65 years ago.

The Klamath Basin Emergency Watershed Protection program deserves special mention. As the people of this Basin struggled to find answers to preserving their resources and livelihood, NRCS and conservation districts took a leadership role. Area 1 staff, as well as those who assisted them throughout California and Oregon, need to be commended for their selfless assistance to the people and resources of that community.

The stories are many and they involve much more than numbers—important as numbers are. These are the stories of what can and does happen when California's landowners are given needed technical know-how and incentives to protect the natural resources under their care. They are inspiring stories that will continue as our new State Conservationist, Chuck Bell, takes on the challenge of leading us in this vital work in 2002 and beyond.

HENRY C. WYMAN,
Interim State Conservationist, 2001



Charles W. Bell

From: La Jolla, California

College Education: BS in Geography; MS in Physical Geography, emphasis in Conservation

NRCS Career: 29+ years (all served in the western U.S.)

Soil Conservationist in 4 California Field

Offices; El Centro, Patterson, Lancaster, Fresno,

District Conservationist: Six years in Colusa County, California.

Snow Survey Programs: Portland Oregon, West National Technical Center (1983-89); Water supply forecasting, software development, field office training.

State Resource Conservationist: Hawaii (1989-92), California (11/92-9/96)

State Conservationist: Alaska (9/96-present)

Authored & Coauthored Publications: Use of Wood Products for Energy Production in California, Landsat Imagery & High Altitude Photography for Vegetation Classification & Prescribed Burning, Use of Infra-red Photography to Locate Springs & Seeps in Chamise Chaparral

Some Career Highlights: Collaboration with NASA & UC Berkeley, Space Sciences Lab on a study to monitor irrigation requirements using remote sensing techniques; Undertook first use of micro-computer and development of computer programs at

the field office level in CA (1978); Organization & Completion of the first 2 Coordinated Resource Management Plans in California (1978-80); Development of prescribed burning Standard and Specification for SCS; Initiation of first Land Treatment (non-structural) PL-566 project in California; Development of software to calculate irrigation water management requirements and relate seasonal water requirements to Snow Survey water supply forecasts using regression analysis, computer programs; Member of NRCS rules committee to draft 1996 Farmland Protection Program rules for federal register; Organized and conducted first Hawaii, interagency Water Quality Training Conference; Expansion of NRCS Field Offices to remote areas of Alaska that have been historically undeserved; Opened 2 new RC&D offices in Alaska

Committee Chairman Positions: Multi-agency Biodiversity Committee, CA; Federal/State, Multi-agency Coordinated Resource Management Planning, CA

Family Status: Married to Marya, a UCD graduate with a degree in Range. Marya, originally from Marin County, has worked as a Conservation District employee in Lockford. Chuck has three children, a daughter (20yrs), and two sons (3 yrs and 6 months).

Favorite Activities: Racquetball, kayaking, hiking, travel, fishing & hunting.

Focus on the North State



A Message from Linden Brooks Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations

It is a pleasure to serve NRCS here in Northern California and to be part of the California Team. I am sure you will enjoy reading about some of the worthwhile work that the offices here in the north state and elsewhere are doing. I am particularly proud of our National Team Award that went to the Ore-Cal RC&D and Trinity RC&D. I hope you enjoy reading the articles and will continue to network with each other across the state to get ideas and to share experiences.

TRINITY AND ORE-CAL RC&Ds WIN HONOR



By Dave Sanden, Public Affairs Specialist, Red Bluff AO

Northern California's Trinity and Ore-Cal Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils received the prestigious United States Department of Agriculture Honor Award for years of tireless effort in assisting rural residents, communities, and businesses in the north state.

Group leader **Scott Eberly** of the Natural Resources Conservation Service accepted the award from U.S. Secretary of Agriculture **Anne Veneman** at USDA's 55th Annual Honor Award ceremony, held on June 4 in Washington, DC. The Honor Award is USDA's highest distinction, denoting excellence and high achievement.

"While the biggest reward in this type of work is successfully finding sustainable solutions to community economic challenges, it's certainly heartening to receive this honor, especially from such a high level," said **Hank Wyman**, NRCS Interim State Conservationist in California. "It represents a vote of confidence that the local Councils together with NRCS are going in the right direction."

In a rural area hit hard by changing industry and high unemployment, the two RC&D councils have worked since they were authorized in 1994 to develop and finance long-term plans for business and community expansion, natural resource development, and education. With the support of local groups and agencies the councils have assisted their communities from within, helping individuals, organizations, and communities plan and complete projects that the communities themselves identify as important.

Securing funding for watershed coordination and leadership, leading successful tourism initiatives in the north state's vast timberlands, and conducting a series of weed control workshops for local landowners are among the group's many recent achievements.



Group Leader Scott Eberly accepted the award from Ag Secretary Ann Veneman in Washington DC on behalf of the RC&D winners.

"This is only the beginning," said Eberly. "Working with our partners and armed with valuable experience accumulated over the last seven years, the Trinity and Ore-Cal RC&D Group will continue to provide leadership and support to help our communities achieve a vigorous economy and a healthy natural environment."

EWP *in the* **Klamath Basin**

Cover Crops Protect Soil, Prevent Dust Bowl

By Dave Sanden, Public Affairs Specialist, Red Bluff AO



The Klamath Project provides water from Upper Klamath Lake to more than 1,300 farms in a 220,000-acre area in northeastern Siskiyou County and northwestern Modoc County in northern California and Klamath County in southern Oregon. The farms normally generate \$210 million a year.

This year, with a winter snowpack measuring less than a third of normal and mounting pressure to protect endangered sucker fish and threatened coho salmon, federal officials announced the unprecedented shutdown of most of the Klamath Reclamation Project's irrigation system.



Dust blowing from bare, dry fields caused several chain-reaction car accidents.

In May, with more than 170,000 acres of farmland in the Klamath Basin dry and unprotected by vegetation, residents faced the looming threats of severe wind erosion and

catastrophic dust storms. Dust storms in the basin had already caused seven chain reaction car accidents that sent several people to the hospital.

NRCS responded to this wind erosion threat by providing \$2 million in cost-share funding for cover crops through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program. California's Lava

Beds and Butte Valley Resource Conservation District (RCD) and Oregon's Klamath Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) served as project sponsors for the work.

EWP sign-ups in California started on May 2 at the Tullake Growers Association Office. In both California and Oregon, drought-plagued farmers showed overwhelming interest in the EWP program, signing up more than 29,000 acres in the first two weeks.

Planting started immediately. It was a race against time. Soil experts estimated that cover crops had to be planted within about a two-week period or there would not be enough moisture in the ground for germination. Some proactive farmers had even started planting cover crops for erosion control before the EWP project began. Most farmers did



A farmer planting cover crop seeds with an air drill near Tullake in early May.

their own planting with their own equipment to meet EWP's cost-share requirement.

By June most of the planting was complete. In California, NRCS had signed-up more than 90 landowners and treated more than 20,000 acres. In the entire Klamath Basin, NRCS had a total of 37,541 acres under EWP. A few farmers who had access to some water signed up for EWP later. The last signup in California occurred in mid July, but there is potential for additional sign ups given the recently released federal water and new wells being dug through a program with the State of California.

Rotating EWP teams worked at a feverish pace, certifying germination on individual fields. By the first day of summer, it was obvious that the EWP effort was a success, especially on the earlier planted fields. Lush, green fields softened the dry landscape and dust storms had subsided.

On June 21, Lava Beds and Butte Valley RCD Director Mike Byrne personally delivered the first



Sprouted seedlings observed in the recently planted fields were a good indication that EWP efforts were working as planned.



An NRCS conservationist certifying germination on a farm near Tulelake.

California EWP check to a participating landowner.

Cover crops have been planted on more than 37,541 acres in the Klamath Basin, in both California and Oregon through the EWP Program. The crops and crop residue will minimize soil erosion and dust blowing, reducing the imminent hazard to life and property.

The water crisis has been a catastrophe for Klamath Basin residents. But NRCS's quick response, the overwhelming interest of the Klamath farmers, and the cooperation of all the parties involved in the EWP effort have helped to ensure that the Klamath Basin does not become a dust bowl.

Although the immediate goals have been met, newly available water may provide enough soil moisture to expand EWP cover-crop treatment to some remaining unplanted areas. NRCS estimates that additional acres could be planted this fall.



John Bowen, a satisfied EWP customer, accessing cover crop growth in one of his barley fields.

Klamath Basin residents seem to be pleased with the results of the EWP project, are happy to see green fields, and are relieved that their precious soil is not blowing away.



EWP TEAM SEES HUMAN SIDE OF TULELAKE TRAGEDY

By Sandra Higa, District Conservationist, Alturas SC

On April 26, I attended a meeting at the Growers Office in Tulelake. Dust levels were so high that I was forced to use headlights while driving around. That evening when I attended another meeting in Dorris, some of the District directors were delayed by a seven-car accident on Highway 58 caused by the windblown dust. By the end of April, NRCS State Offices in California and Oregon had declared an emergency in the Klamath Basin and employees from Alturas, Yreka, and Klamath Falls gathered in Klamath Falls to organize and roll out our EWP Program.

On Wednesday May 2, I arrived at the Tulelake Growers Office at 11:30 a.m., just ahead of the rest of the group. As I came down the hallway a lot of folks were standing around as if on a break from a meeting. As I opened the door to the FSA office, someone asked if I was with the "Ground Cover" program. I replied that I was, and the entire crowd headed into the office.

Thus began six weeks of 12-hour days (including weekends) for the California NRCS team, which rotated in and out of the temporary Tulelake office to provide emergency erosion-control assistance.

Emotions were running high in the Klamath Basin, and coming into the area, we had some concern about the safety of employees driving government vehicles. The building where we worked had an ominous sign painted in the front window that read: "Feed the Feds to the Fish!" Signs of similar sentiment were scattered throughout the town and along the roadways. We were also concerned about how to safely locate the fields we were to certify. We needed to move quickly and accurately. The answer was simple: ask the landowners to accompany us out to the fields!

Sadly, we have witnessed many tragedies in Tulelake: hard-working farmers forced into bankruptcy; a farmer who turned in his 4-year-old Ford Taurus because he had no money for his children's school lunches and could not get his children on the school lunch program because he owns property and equipment; The list goes on and on.

In spite of the stress these farmers are experiencing, they still hang onto their sense of humor. They are polite and have treated all of us with respect. They invited me to dinner at their homes, offered to do laundry, invited me to bring my dog to stay with them while I work here, etc. Although I did not accept any of these offers, the kindness of the farmers was very touching and much appreciated.

We had 85-year-old gentlemen coming into our office to show us that they had papers "signed by a President" guaranteeing them water in perpetuity. So many were certain that everything will be fixed—"Our government would never do such a thing to us!" I and the many others who helped these folks with the EWP Program cannot understand this kind of thing happening either.

By June most of the planting was complete and we had signed up 97 farmers and treated over 20,000 acres. But the farmers continue to come by the office just to visit about the situation and share what is going on since we last went with them to their fields.

Some time in June, an elderly gentleman came to our office in response to a phone message he had picked up earlier. I asked if the message pertained to his payment; he thought that it did. I got out his file and checked. The file indicated that he had a certain amount of payment that had been paid. I asked him if it was the correct amount. He indicated that it was. I asked him if he had received his check for that amount. He had. The conversation then proceeded to drift to other subjects and concerns. When this farmer stood up to go he told me with a twinkle in his eye that he thought maybe that message was from a couple of weeks ago and not to worry about it.

The bottom line is that these folks who have farmed for 50 or 60 years suddenly find themselves for the first time during the growing season with no farming to do and plenty of time to have a cup of coffee with friends and visit around town.

The younger generation around Tulelake seem to be the most stressed. As one older farmer told me, "My wife and I can hang on for a couple of years. We have no debt and our needs are small. However, the younger farmers with mortgages, car payments and children at home will not be able to hold on for very long."

FIELD TRIALS EVALUATE CARBON LEVELS

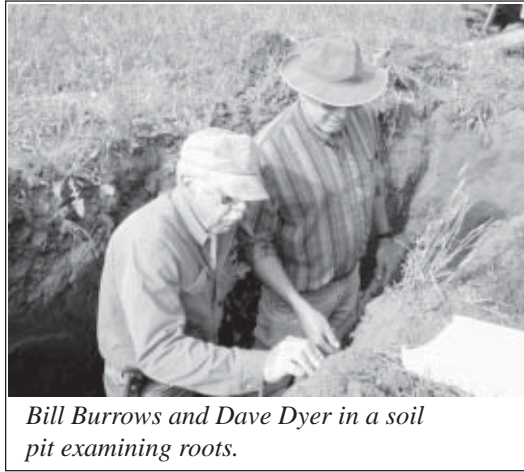
By Dave Sanden, Area Public Affairs Specialist, Red Bluff AO

The NRCS Conservation Field Trial (CFT) program was used to translate visionary local leaders' ideas into action. Partnerships were built to assess the potential of perennial grasses and conservation practices on grazing land to sequester carbon in the soil.

At the request of **Mark Steffek**, North Cal-Neva R C&D Coordinator (Alturas), **Erik Beardsley**, Area Resource Conservationist (Red Bluff) conducted a literature review on soil carbon sequestration. Beardsley's presentation to the RC&D council revealed that much United States rangeland is considered disturbed due to domination by Mediterranean annual grasses and erosion. Scientific studies indicated restoration of deep rooting native perennial grasses and well planned grazing or prescribed burning can lead to long term (20–25 years) storage of atmospheric carbon in the soil.

Information shared at the meeting soon reached ranchers **Bill** (Tehama County RCD Associate Director) & **Kay Burrows**, **Frank** (TCRCD Associate Director), **Vicky** (TCRCD Program Manager) and **Tyler Dawley**, **Scott Stone** (Yolo County RCD President) and **Rich Stewart** (YCRCD Director). Requests for technical assistance from the conservation districts via District Conservationists **Larry Branham** (Red Bluff), and **Phil Hogan** (Woodland) and Soil Conservationist **John Weatherford** (Woodland) to evaluate perennial grass plantings on four ranches found their way back to Beardsley.

Beardsley launched coordination of the CFTs at the Lockeford Plant Materials Center (PMC), where during the past 15 years Director **Dave Dyer** collected soil, root and bio-mass data on 'Perla' koleagress (CA cultivar) for its soil carbon sequestration and bio-mass conversion to ethanol potential. Dyer and Beardsley sought guidance from NRCS Soil Quality Institute (SQI) Director **Craig Ditzler** and Soil Scientist **M. Lee Norfleet**. The SQI provided them with the soil sampling protocol developed for quantifying soil carbon sequestration on Conservation Reserve Program



Bill Burrows and Dave Dyer in a soil pit examining roots.

(CRP) perennial grass plantings for use by Clinton Administration envoys to the Kyoto, Japan global greenhouse gas mitigation negotiations.

As the two three-year projects came together, multi-disciplinary teams were formed. The field teams were comprised of Area Resource Soil Scientist **James Komar**, (Red Bluff), Range Management Specialists **Wade Anderson** (Red Bluff) and

Stephen Jaouen (Woodland), Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Soil Science Technician **Machelle Nelson**, (Corvallis, OR), as well as Dyer, Beardsley, Weatherford, Branham, and landowners.

NRCS Global Climate Change Program Director **Joel Brown**, Ph.D., ARS Soil Scientist, **Stephen Griffith**, Ph.D., University of California Cooperative Extension Livestock Advisor **Marc Horney**, Ph.D., UC Davis Plant Physiologist **William Horwath**, Ph.D., Soil Scientist **Randy Dahlgren**, Ph.D. and Statistician **Neil Willits**, Ph.D. shared insights toward developing a sampling design to account for spatial variability of perennial grass growth patterns. **Judy Boshoven** and **Jeanne Wirka** with California Audubon provided expertise on native perennial grass establishment and management, as well as prescribed burning. NRCS State Resource Conservationist **Diane Holcomb** played the role of budget process guide.

The first 200 soil samples analyzed at UC Davis are en route to NASA/Los Alamos Laboratories where Norfleet is assisting with development and testing of a battery powered Laser Induced Burn Spectrometer (LIBS) for the Mars probe. Field trial laboratory data will be used to help develop analogs for analysis of LIBS readings. The ARS/University of NM Experiment Station in Las Cruces is working on development of tractor mounted version of LIBS for use in precision farming and soil carbon sequestration field verification. Norfleet plans to bring the LIBS to California to take in situ soil carbon readings in conjunction with the field trials.

RESTORED WETLAND FULFILLS A DREAM

By Dave Sanden, Area Public Affairs Specialist, Red Bluff AO

In 1989, Yolo County realtor **Jeff Dyer** purchased 98 acres of marginal farmland east of Zamora, California. The land had previously been used to grow rice, tomatoes, and other crops but the heavy alkaline clay soil made farming conditions less than ideal. Dyer farmed part of the land, but he had other plans for a large portion of the property. He wanted to restore a wetland.

Dyer loves wildlife and is an avid hunter. He envisioned a special place where wildlife could thrive and be viewed in a natural setting. In 1999, with assistance provided through the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Dyer began to make his vision a reality. He successfully restored 34 acres of seasonal marsh through a 30-year WRP easement.

NRCS assisted Dyer with the excavation work and installation of a water supply system that includes underground pipelines, restored channels, and water-

control structures. Excavation spoil was used to enhance levees and create islands in two of the ponds. Water comes from three sources: pumped well water, field water that flows into the pond system through the sediment basin, and pumped field runoff from a nearby irrigation channel. Dyer established and maintains a variety of wetland plants and perennial vegetation that reduces soil erosion and sedimentation, improves water quality, and provides habitat for wildlife. He also installed a pump to



Jeff Dyer standing by restored wetlands at JJ Farms.

control the water level for brood pond areas and resident waterfowl.

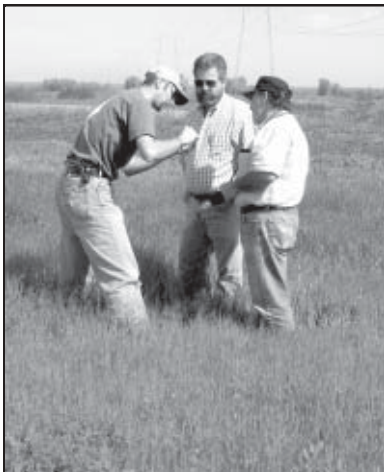
Dyer's efforts to create a rich and diverse environment for wildlife have paid off. Songbirds are ubiquitous. The ponds are commonly filled with ducks, geese, egrets, and other waterfowl. The fields are alive with many varieties of game birds. Deer, coyotes, rabbits, muskrats, raccoons and many other animals are frequent visitors to the ponds.

"There are usually hundreds of ducks in the ponds—even during hunting season," said Dyer. "And when I go hunting out there, I'll usually find over 200 pheasants," he said pointing to a field of tall grass east of the ponds.

Dyer often experiments with the plants he uses to attract wildlife—trying to find the right mix. And sometimes he makes startling discoveries by accident.

"After burning one of my fields to eliminate weeds, I discovered that the field border had burned as well," said Dyer. "When the border grew back it was mostly in gumplant, and the next time I came out that strip was thick with doves. I didn't realize it before, but doves just love gumplant."

Dyer said that he is now planning to put in some hedgerows around his sediment basin and maybe some trees that will attract even more birds.



From left to right, Range Management Specialist Stephen Jaouen, Dyer, and Soil Conservationist John Weatherford examine flourishing perennial native grasses that provide upland wildlife habitat. Dyer hand-sowed the native grass seed himself and worked hard to eliminate noxious weeds so the grasses could thrive, but he is very pleased with the results.

A DAY IN THE DISTRICT

By Paul Lake, Soil Conservationist, Yuba City SC

On May 31, Sutter County Resource Conservation District (SCRCD) displayed its multifaceted community involvement during "A Day in the District." Members of the private and public sectors joined the RCD Directors on a van tour to view some of that ongoing work conducted in cooperation with agricultural producers and private landowners.

SCRCD has a long history of promoting irrigation water management. Last year, the District obtained \$25,000 in grant funding to implement an Irrigation Water Management (IWM) project. Orchardists in Sutter and Yuba Counties worked with SCRCD to install gypsum blocks in their orchards to monitor subsoil moisture. The "Day in the District" tour showcased this and other activities conducted by the Sutter County RCD, in conjunction with NRCS.

Attendees included **Kim Davis** for **Senator Johannesen**, **Holly Whittaker** for **Assemblyman Dick Dickerson**, Yuba/Sutter Farm Bureau President **Mark Kochi**, Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner **Mark Quisenberry**, and **Lisa Wilson** for Sutter County Community Services Department.

At the first stop, efficient irrigation water management was exemplified in a walnut orchard owned by **Michael Bakis**, retired local high school science teacher. Through EQIP, Bakis converted his inefficient irrigation system to a permanent, micro-type sprinkler system. Bakis is also committed to irrigation water management using gypsum blocks. Integrated pest management (IPM) and nutrient management were requirements of his Conservation Plan of Operations, but Bakis has gone the second mile by experimenting with several IPM procedures. He enjoys sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm with others.

Our visit to the Bakis orchard provided a great opportunity for me to demonstrate gypsum block installation techniques (*see photo*). For years NRCS had been using an antiquated, truck-mounted soil auger to help growers install the blocks. The procedure could be both difficult and dangerous in closely planted orchards. SCRCD's new generator and power auger provides a safer, more convenient way to help participants who want to closely manage water application.

The second stop on the tour was a 74-acre prune orchard owned by **Ramsaren S.**

Dhanota. Through EQIP cost-sharing, Dhanota converted his irrigation system from a very inefficient open-ditch flood irrigation system to a modern, efficient pipeline flood system with a valve at every tree row. Dhanota has also conducted a variety of cover crop field trials with **Fred Thomas** of Cerus Consulting, funded through an EQIP Conservation Education Grant. The combination of improved irrigation system, nutrient and pest management practices, and cover crop trials has helped to improve local water quality.



The group next visited irrigated pasture owned by **George Morrison**, which is a great example of improved irrigation and pasture/grazing management planning. Through EQIP, Morrison installed an efficient pipeline flood irrigation system with a valve in each pasture check. He also established a grazing management system, including cross fencing, transfer lane, and stock watering system at his own expense. Subsequently, he created six grazing units across his 63-acre pasture and is using a rest/rotation grazing system. Morrison is pleased with the way his lane and stock water system allow him to observe the cattle from one location on a daily basis and shift them between units without excitement. His pasture and cattle health improved with his new system.

Our last stop was a WRP project. Through WRP, **Mark Vidulich** created habitat for wetland wildlife on 47 acres adjacent to Pleasant Grove Creek. WRP structural measures and management practices have attracted a variety of waterfowl and other wildlife. Vidulich is very pleased to see the increase in baby ducklings using his pond. Because of this year's dry conditions, most of the vicinity has dried up. His brood pond provides a much-needed oasis.

MARIN COUNTY RANCH FAMILY WORKS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

By Jim Salomone, Earth Team Volunteer, Petaluma SC

The Casarotti home ranch is located in Northern Marin County California in an ideal setting 15 minutes South of the Sonoma County wine country and East of Tomales Bay and the Point Reyes National Seashore. The ranch itself is situated in a majestic mountain range of rolling hills, valleys and a scattering of native oaks.

Ranch owners **Rich** and **Rosemary Casarotti** run over 200 head of black crossbred cattle. Unlike many ranch families that have had ranches handed down from generation to generation the Casarottis lease all of their property including the home ranch. Over 6,500 acres are leased on five separate ranches that are located near Fallon in west Marin County and Bodega in west Sonoma.

The Casarottis say that things have changed over the years. There are more and more tourists in the area, fewer tracts of land available for grazing, and increased planting of grapevines. "The farming community must be more aware of the environment and take proactive measures to improve the natural resources that ranching depends on" says Rich. Rosemary adds that "our biggest environmental challenge on most of the ranches is controlling erosion."

The home ranch is located in the Stemple Creek Watershed. The lower part of the ranch is situated so that much of the drainage in the area runs right through the ranch which has caused a large gully that in some spots is close to 15 feet deep.

The tributary on the ranch is actively eroding and denuding the riparian corridor, which is over 4,000 feet in length. Several headcuts join the main tributary from the side drainages and eventually join Little Fallon Creek, a tributary to Stemple Creek and the Estero de San Antonio.

But the Casarottis have made great progress in reducing erosion and improving water quality on their ranch. With financial and technical assistance from NRCS and the Marin County RCD, they have put a considerable amount of time, effort, hard work, and money into improving the home ranch.

Springs were developed to provide water for livestock. This allowed the Casarottis to improve livestock pasture management through rotational grazing, greater livestock distribution, and proper grazing of residual levels. A vertical spring box was constructed to capture subsurface water. Water is piped 300 feet underground to 680-gallon metal troughs. The troughs are equipped with a float valve to prevent water from overflowing. The spring box area is also fenced to protect the spring from livestock damage.

The Casarottis installed livestock fencing and made repairs on the significant head cuts in the drainage system. The channels were revegetated with willows and native grasses. The repaired headcuts varied in height from 2.5 to 8 feet. A fabric-reinforced earth fill with brush layering was constructed to repair a headcut that was 15 feet wide. Also, willow post revetments were constructed along a 40-foot stream bank, and a 232-foot long rock lined channel was constructed to divert water away from an adjacent gully system.

A seasonal tributary gully to Stemple Creek is expanding at a high rate, which contributes a significant sediment load to the drainage. Soils on the home ranch are highly erodible. An existing sediment basin built in 1984 failed in 1998 due to the severe El Niño storms that undercut the dam spillway. Through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program, the sediment control basin was rebuilt with a concrete spillway to stabilize the grade, minimize cutting, and collect the sediment. The area was also seeded with annual grasses and mulched for erosion control.

The Casarotti's have embraced and implemented many new strategies that improve the environment. The family is one of many California ranch families that recognize the importance of preserving the land for the benefit of their livestock enterprise but also for future generations to enjoy and experience. They have strong family values and they also have a strong desire to maintain the land that provides them a continuing heritage and livelihood as California cattle ranchers.

DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST INVOLVED WITH FARMLAND PROTECTION EFFORTS NATIONWIDE

By Phil Hogan, District Conservationist, Woodland SC

No doubt you have heard about FPP and FPPA, or LESA and LISA. I attended a LESA meeting once in Sacramento and one guy showed up for a LISA meeting. More about that later.

Speaking of FPP and FPPA, what is the difference? If you don't know, don't feel bad. That's why a team of district conservationists (including yours truly), area conservationists, and other NRCSers throughout the country have met twice this year at headquarters in Washington, D.C. This team, sponsored by **Cheryl Simmons** and **Denise Coleman** of the Farmland Protection and Community Planning (FPCPP) staff, is charged with putting together a training session on farmland protection.

This training will follow a conference sponsored by the American Farmland Trust November 14-16 in St. Charles, Illinois. The training portion of this conference will be "train the trainer" oriented, in which two or three conservationists from each state will then have responsibility for training other conservationists back home for the Farmland Protection Program, the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), and the development of local Land Evaluation and Site Assessment systems (LESA) systems. The training in St. Charles will also give an overview of recent changes in the Land Use Manual (GM 310 Parts 400 to 404) material related to FPPA and LESA.

Also, the session will provide detailed training on improvements made to the FPPA AD-1006 and the incorporation of local LESA systems into the FPPA AD-1006 process. Cheryl and Denise of the FPCPP staff are working with the National Employee Development Center to create training kits for use in each State.

Attending from California will be **Mark Parson** (Resource Conservationist, State Office); **Glenn Stanisewski** (Soil Resource Specialist, State Office) and **Phil Hogan** (District Conservationist, Woodland Service Center).

And now for that difference between the FPPA and FPP. The FPPA is the Farmland Protection Policy Act, which gives NRCS the leadership role in assisting federal agencies to identify and take into account the adverse

effects of their programs on the preservation of farmland, to consider alternative actions that could lessen adverse effects, and to ensure that their programs are compatible with State and units of local and tribal government and private programs and policies to protect farmland. NRCS carries out this role with the Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form (AD-1006), which assigns a point score on the relative value of the farmland impacted by the federal project.

The Farmland Protection Program, which was authorized in the 1996 Farm Bill, authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to establish and carry out a Farmland Protection Program to help State, Tribal, or local government entities purchase conservation easements on farmland.

Products that I have generated so far as a result of these two meetings are fact sheets on the FPPA, and a PowerPoint presentations for the definitions used in the Farmland Protection Policy Act and the Yolo County Land Evaluation and Site Assessment system.

Perhaps many of you believe that NRCS does not, or should not, have a role in farmland protection. After all, shouldn't this be left to local government? I believe that NRCS can play an important and vital role in protecting our State's precious farmlands.

According to the General Manual, NRCS assistance is limited to providing technically sound natural resource information and assistance for decision-makers to make better land use choices. State and local governments *should* be the ones to develop plans, laws, regulations, and then implement them. Many of us are already doing this through erosion and sediment control guidelines, storm water ordinances, etc. But we can also get involved with building local Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Systems (LESA). This is not the same as LISA (Low Input Sustainable Agriculture), much to that poor fellow's chagrin back in the first paragraph. LESA systems assign points to the relative value of farmland based on a two-part system: Land Evaluation (LE), and, you guessed it, Site Assessment (SA). The LE portion addresses soil factors, and the SA portion looks at social and economic ramifications of farmland.

PRESCRIBED BURN ON GOAT MOUNTAIN

By Loretta J. Metz, Rangeland Management Specialist, Willows SC

Rounding the last dog-leg of Goat Mountain Road brought the pillowy column of gray smoke into view. I stopped for a photo on the edge of a serpentine outcrop and then made my way back to the truck filled with drip torches, Nomex and **Joe Short**, my burn partner for the day. Not far behind us were **Marc** and **Cindy Horney** from UC Davis, also here to help on the fireline. The smell of the smoke hadn't reached us yet, but our nerves were primed for an exciting day of burning forest undergrowth to restore plant and wildlife diversity, reduce fuel hazards on private lands, and improve watershed health.

Gary Evans, Colusa County RCD Director, grew up in these mountains that form the beginning reaches of the Upper Stony Creek Watershed. Blindfolded and dropped out of a helicopter, he could probably tell you exactly where he landed – correctly. Nearly every wrinkle in the rough topography has had Gary's footprint on it, or his father's before him.

Gary and **Diane Evans** own property on Goat Mountain, along with about 15 other landowners and are participating in the Little Upper Stony Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan for their properties, which are surrounded by the Mendocino National Forest. The plan has been a long-term coordinated effort undertaken by private landowners, the Colusa

County RCD, federal, state and local agencies. The first understory prescribed burn occurred in January 1999. This burn is the second one, and was ignited on January 6, 2001. Gary and I established four permanent monitoring plots to collect quantitative data. We monitored before the burn in November, and after the burn in April. Monitoring is ongoing, as we are still seeing slow death of the manzanita brush, and regrowth on the perennial grasses.

The series of prescribed burns will continue, during the winter months, in an effort to achieve a more healthy forest. The ladder fuels, diseased and pest-infected trees and ground fuels will be removed slowly over time, one property at a time. For more information on this challenging prescribed burn, or the coordinated planning process involved, contact the Colusa County Resource Conservation District at 530-458-2931.

Goals of the prescribed burn

1. Reduce duff layer by 50 percent to reduce the amount of fine ground fuels
2. Reduce manzanita brush by 75 percent or more because it is an invasive brush species that inhibits conifer growth and serves as a ladder fuel
3. Reduce residue (tons/acre) to reduce fuel loading in the area
4. Reduce density of tree seedlings to promote growth of older trees
5. Increase native perennial grass presence to improve infiltration and reduce soil erosion

Results of the burn

(monitored on April 3, 2001)

Reduced duff layer by:

- 64% on Plot 1
- 33% on Plot 2
- 61% on Plot 3
- 55% on Plot 4

Reduced manzanita by:

- 75% on Plot 3
- 32% on Plot 4

(Plots 1 and 2 had no manzanita present)

- Reduced residue (tons/acre) by:
- 13% on Plot 2
- 28% on Plot 3
- 41% on Plot 4

(Plot 1 increased in residue due to tree falling after the burn)

Increased native perennial grasses by:

- 240 plants/acre on Plot 1
- 30 plants/acre on Plot 2
- 1340 plants/acre on Plot 4

(Plot 3 decreased by 900 plants/acre, not sure why)

Reduced density of tree seedlings by:

- 97% on Plot 1
- 87% on Plot 4

(Density on Plots 2 and 3 were unchanged)

FARMS LEADERSHIP STUDENTS LEARN BY DOING

By Dave Sanden, Area Public Affairs Specialist, Red Bluff AO

On March 27, teachers and students from four high schools gathered at 3 Creek Ranch in Glenn County to learn about sustainable agriculture and natural resource management during a FARMS (Farming, Agriculture, and Resource Management for Sustainability) Leadership field day.

“FARMS currently has seven sites around the state, with more to come,” says FARMS State Coordinator **Mary Kimball**. “We hold field days once a month during the year-long program, rotating between the sites.”

This FARMS session began with a brief history and management overview of Chet Vogt’s 3 Creek Ranch, which was recently featured in *Grazing for Change: Range and Watershed Management Success Stories in California*. Concurrent field activities included stream macroinvertebrate sampling led by District Conservationist **Dennis Nay**, plant identification with Range Conservationist **Lori Metz**, and a riparian health assessment demonstration conducted by **Theresa Ward** of UC Davis. The students gathered and identified riparian and range vegetation, learned how to assess water quality, and peered with amazement through a microscope at insect specimens Nay had collected from the water of Stony Creek.

*“The activities and projects help me to better understand my other school subjects, like biology,” said Corning High School Sophomore **Bryanna Issori**. “Things make a lot more sense when you’re actually doing them.”*



Dennis Nay collects water from Stony Creek during his lesson on stream macroinvertebrate sampling.



Students get a closer look at the creatures they discovered in the waters of Stony Creek.

Participants came from Hamilton City, Elk Creek, Chico, and Corning high schools—about six students from each school. Most of the students have an agricultural background, and many are planning for careers in agriculture.

“FARMS is good for people going into agriculture, said Elk Creek High School Junior **Tara Coughlin**. “The hands-on approach is beneficial and makes learning a lot more interesting for me.”

Started in 1994 in Winters, Calif., the FARMS Leadership Program educates high school students about career opportunities in agriculture and gets them out of the classroom to gain hands-on experience. The students learn through participation in site visits, projects, and face-to-face interaction with farmers, ranchers, and conservation professionals. Mentors from NRCS, the University of California, and the University of California Cooperative Extension Service provide technical workshops to introduce the students to soil, water, agronomy, pest management, and general agricultural practices. The North Valley Program, involving Tehama, Butte and Glenn counties, started in September 2000.

“To get the most out of a program like this, you have to be interested,” said Elk Creek High School teacher **Bryan Bentz**. “Six out of 40 students at Elk Creek are involved in FARMS. But the program just started last fall, so not many people know about it yet.”

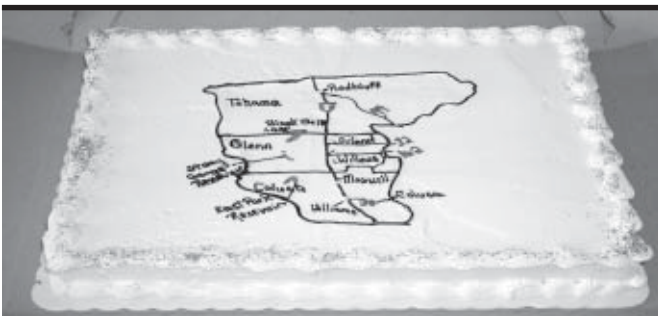
CENTRAL VALLEY PARTNERS CELEBRATE NEW RC&D AREA KICKOFF

By Dave Sanden, Public Affairs Specialist, Red Bluff AO

On April 11, representatives from the offices of Congressman **Doug Ose** and State Senator **Maurice Johannessen**, three county supervisor boards, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, and a host of sponsors and supporters gathered in Orland, California, to celebrate the official designation of the Central Sacramento Resource Conservation and Development (CSVRC&D) Area.

CSVRC&D was one of 33 RC&D areas approved by former U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary **Dan Glickman** from hundreds of applicants nationwide. The federal approval provides the CSVRC&D Council with federal funds for coordination and clerical support to work towards its goals of developing community outreach programs, promoting wise stewardship through watershed management, developing a fuels management program, and improving employment opportunities within the area.

The ceremony provided an opportunity to recognize and thank all the individuals who worked for and supported the application effort and reaffirmed the partnerships that have been established.



After the ceremony, everyone enjoyed CSVRC&D's birthday cake, decorated with a map of the new RC&D area.



*Partners and supporters included (from left to right) **Dan Martynn, Jim Kocsis, John Benoit, Donnan Arbuckle, Ernie White, Gary Freeman, Kim Davis, Christy Scofield, Joan Smith, Terry Williams, Dennis Nay, Tom McGowan, Mark Steffek, Lin Brooks, and Claudia Martin.***

The CSVRC&D Area is comprised of Glenn, Colusa, and Tehama counties and has a population of approximately 100,000 within its 3,400,700 acres. The CSVRC&D Council will partner with civic, government, business, and conservation interests to accomplish its goals and will operate throughout the three counties.

Sponsoring the new RC&D are the Colusa County, Glenn County, and Tehama County Resource Conservation Districts. Other sponsors include the Board of Supervisors and Economic Development Corporations from Colusa, Glen, and Tehama counties.

On August 13, **Larry Akin** came on board as the CSVRC&D Project Coordinator to help sponsors and supporters accomplish their goals. Akin returns to California from the State of Washington, where he served as Assistant Director of Workforce Systems Partnerships and liaison to 12 workforce investment areas. He brings much needed skill and experience to the infant RC&D, having worked ten years for the U.S. Forest Service in California in an interdisciplinary role and 14 years as an international consultant.

WESTERN SHASTA RCD RECEIVES CHECK FROM WASHINGTON FOR PROJECT FUEL

By Dave Sanden, Public Affairs Specialist, Red Bluff AO

While visiting Redding on June 15, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture **Ann Veneman** personally presented Western Shasta Resource Conservation District almost \$96,000 for projects grants called "Project Fuel." **Mary Schroeder** and **Stewart Gray** of the RCD accepted the check.

The money was provided to minimize fire risks along four watersheds leading into the Sacramento River. The project includes building shaded fuel breaks in Igo, Old Shasta, Shingletown, and French Gulch. Western Shasta RCD will explore ways to haul the woody residue to wood-fired power plants for conversion to electricity, including Wheel-arbator Shasta Energy Company in Anderson.



RCD Office Manager **Mary Shroeder** and Director **Stuart Gray** received a \$95,779 check from Secretary of Agriculture **Ann Veneman** at the Redding Airport.

DISTRICTS HOST WORKSHOPS

By Len Kashuba, District Conservationist, Lakeport LPO

On June 9 and 16, the East Lake and West Lake RCDs in Lake County provided watershed management workshops through NRCS EQIP funding.

Greg Dills, Watershed Coordinator, setup two half-day Saturday sessions with good turnouts.

Topics included water quality monitoring, invasive weeds, bioengineering techniques, and road related erosion. Dr. Harry Lyons discussed the water quality indicators of aquatic insects. During the sessions on June 9, the presenter spoke on the control of stream side vegetation and discussed *Arundo donax* (a noxious weed). The June 16 sessions included two presentations: Roads, Construction and Maintenance by **Dr. William Weaver** of Pacific Watershed Associates and; Streambank and Gully Erosion Control by **Evan Engber** of Bioengineering Associates.



Dr. Harry Lyons discusses the water quality indicators of aquatic insects during a EQIP funded watershed management workshop hosted by East Lake and West Lake RCDs in June.

FLOOD-PLAGUED DEVELOPMENT SITE TO EMERGE AS EDUCATIONAL WETLANDS

By Anita Brown, State Public Affairs Director, Davis SO

Just in time for the new school year, 58.5 acres in Trinity County has finally found its intended purpose: an educational and recreational wetlands for a mountain community.

Thirty years ago the land was grazed and forested, although drainage problems kept it from being especially productive. In 1985 Trinity County bought the land with an eye toward developing an industrial park—but a determination by the Army Corps of Engineers that the site contained wetlands dampened that vision. The 1997 floods of Weaver Creek and Lance Gulch convinced officials not to sell the two remaining parcels. But in September there was broad consensus that the land's drainage problems actually held the key to its ultimate solution.

Trinity County Supervisors received almost \$30,000 from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to create a wetlands management area at the Trinity Alps Business and Industrial Park site. As a restored wetland the formerly troublesome spot will reduce nearby flooding, enhance water quality in

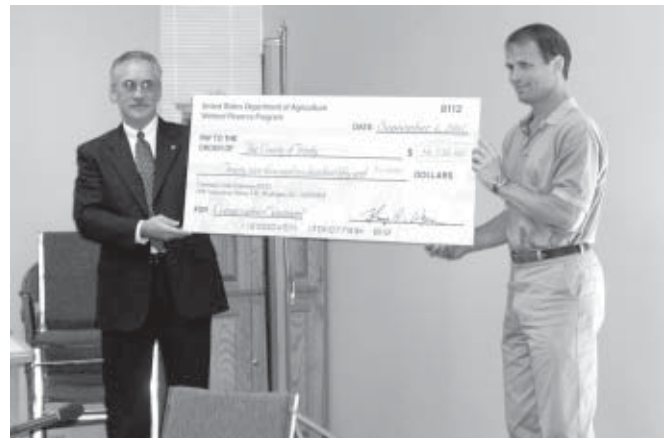
Weaver Creek, create habitat for wildlife, and increase local educational and recreational opportunities.

The \$30,000 pays for a perpetual easement funded through USDA's Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). NRCS is also providing 100 percent of the estimated \$96,000 cost of restoring the wetlands, including surveying, design, permitting, and construction costs. NRCS and the Trinity County Resource Conservation District (RCD) are providing technical support for the project, including the design of the proposed wetland construction.

"While there have been more than 60,000 acres restored through WRP in California this easement is unique in many ways," says Interim State Conservationist **Hank Wyman**. "It's the first project owned by a County, and the first project constructed with public education and recreation as primary objectives." Trinity County RCD Manager **Pat Frost** added that it is also the first WRP project done in a mountainous setting. "WRP restorations are usually done on flatter farmland," he said.



Trinity County RCD Manager Pat Frost (left) explains the proposed wetland design to the Trinity County Board of Supervisors. NRCS is providing 100 percent of the \$95,750 estimated cost of restoring wetlands within the easement area, including surveying, design, permitting, and construction costs. The project will reduce flooding, enhance water quality, create habitat for wildlife, and increase recreational opportunities in the Weaverville area.



*On Sept. 4, Trinity County Supervisors received a check for \$29,250 from NRCS for creation of a wetlands management area in the Trinity Alps Business and Industrial Park. State Wetlands Biologist **Alan Forkey** presented the check to the Trinity County Board of Supervisors during an agreement-signing ceremony at Trinity County Free Library in Weaverville. Representatives from local, state, and federal agencies as well as elected officials attended the ceremony.*

RUSSIAN RIVER LANDOWNERS PROACTIVE ABOUT CONSERVATION

By Charlette Sanders, District Conservationist, Petaluma SC

Since 1997 over 100 agricultural producers on 40,000 acres in Sonoma and Marin counties have participated in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), a program geared to enhance and restore the environment. Many farmers contributed more than the required 30 percent cost-share because of their commitment to an environmental project that would benefit their land. Most of the projects dealt with preventing erosion, habitat improvement in riparian areas, and advanced methods for managing livestock manure. The following are just a few examples of EQIP successes.

Bernard Nahmens runs over 100 head of beef cattle on his property that includes the Ridge Valley Creek riparian area near Sebastopol. His cattle freely roamed the property including access to the creek. In some areas this caused creek bank instability, increased erosion and poor water quality that eventually can reach the Russian River. Since livestock can be hazardous to riparian habitat, an obvious solution and a new environmental strategy to limit creek access by livestock has been very successful. Nahmens installed over two miles of fencing along the creek to keep the cows out. "EQIP provided me the resources and guidance to get this project in place" said Nahmens. "The cows do have access to certain parts of the creek for drinking water but most of the creek is off limits to the cows." The creek area has now shown new native vegetation growth and the riparian habitat along the creek has flourished.

John Bucher from Bucher Farms runs a dairy on Westside Road in Healdsburg. Bucher used the EQIP program to help qualify the dairy for the California State Environmental Stewardship Award. Bucher installed two additional manure ponds that provided five more acre feet of winter storage capacity. That storage capacity along with other environmental improvements that Bucher implemented was recently approved for State Certification by State Dairy Auditors. "Doing our EQIP project was a key part to receiving the State award," said Bucher. "The new ponds gave us that extra measure of assurance to

maintain water quality in the nearby creeks and tributaries, especially during heavy storm periods."

Jay and Debbie Pruitt of Two Rock near the Sonoma/Marin County line installed cattle fencing to keep livestock out of the creek that improved water quality in the Stemple Creek Watershed. In their investigation they noticed severe erosion along certain areas of the creek. Through EQIP, and with the help of the Marin RCD and NRCS, they also installed what is called a "willow weave" in the damaged creek area. A willow weave starts with a number of willow branches that have been trimmed to 2 or 3 feet. These cuttings are then pounded into the creek bank in a weave pattern that will eventually re-enforce the creek bank and prevent erosion. Since willows thrive in wet soil, they are the perfect plant material for this application. Willows are also native California vegetation for the Russian River.

Chris Benziger of Benziger Family Winery in Glen Ellen is in the process of installing a rock walled waterway that will also serve as a buffer zone between the vineyards and an area that they will be promoting as a bio-diversity break or insect sanctuary. "We want to increase the number of beneficial insects in an area close to the vineyards and encourage these insects to prosper instead of using insecticides on the non-beneficial insects," said Benziger. "I call it a bug walkway." The project is funded in part through EQIP for erosion control. Benziger is responsible for all the labor and equipment. The project is in its first phase and will not be completed until next year. "The EQIP program falls right into our family farming strategy and that is to create a low impact farming method that will preserve the land for future generations," said Benziger.

"There is a great interest among farmers, ranchers and other landowners to be proactive about conservation in the Russian River," says **Carol Mandel**, NRCS Soil Conservationist for the Russian River. "It's a big watershed but bit-by-bit it's working," said Mandel. "Its people doing the right thing day after day to protect the land and the water."

SJV RC&D IS MOVING AHEAD

by Chu Yang, Soil Conservationist, Visalia FO

With last years designation of three new Resource Conservation Districts (RC&Ds) in California, new proposed areas like the San Joaquin Valley RC&D are looking to capitalize on that momentum. Shortly after the announcement of last year's designated areas, efforts began in Area III to inform partners, assess interest and solicit support for the establishment of a San Joaquin Valley RC&D area.

RC&D presentations were made to relevant Resource Conservation Districts and some County Board of Supervisor representatives. The proposed RC&D area will cover valley portions or in some cases all of the six counties stretching from Merced to Kern counties.



Curtis Tarver, and Jerry Progner listen to Noreen McDonald as she shares some of her experiences in developing and submitting a RC&D application at a recent RC&D planning meeting held in Fresno.

On July 17, Valley RCD representatives participated in a planning meeting to draft proposed RC&D boundaries, establish a steering committee, and voice their concerns on local issues. The meeting was held in Fresno with RCD representatives and NRCS staff attending. **Noreen McDonald** facilitated the meeting and could offer testimonial experience since she was a major force in submitting a RC&D application for the now established Yosemite/Sequoia RC&D.

The outcome of the meeting led to the conclusion that additional partners must provide input to determine a RC&D boundary and determine concerns. A list of additional partners was developed, and participants also developed a list of their concerns.

An additional meeting was held in Fresno on August 30th that included additional partners with input and support to establish the proposed San Joaquin Valley RC&D.

NEW EMPLOYEES LEARN ABOUT SOILS AND SOIL QUALITY



New Conservationists and engineers were provided a crash course in soils and soils quality by Area Resource Soil Scientist **Jim Komar** (left) during a July workshop hosted by the Red Bluff Field Office.

Arundo Patrol in Madera County

By

Jennifer Gabor, Soil Conservationist, Madera FO

Earlier this year, I teamed up with Chowchilla-Redtop Resource Conservation District representatives to map the valley portion of Madera County for *Arundo Donax*, also known as false bamboo or giant reed.

The team has taken the first steps of eradication by aerial mapping the area to get photos of this aggressive, alien plant as it invades the sloughs and canals in which local farmers receive their irrigation water. *Arundo* is a threat to the farmers primarily because this weed can consume more water than an entire crop such as almonds or alfalfa, consuming as much as 500 gallons of water per square yard.



*Madera Soil Scientist **Tom Caudill** stands next to an early colony of *Arundo* before it reaches its 30 foot height and becomes thick enough to crowd out native plant species and wildlife habitat.*

The nonnative grass species was introduced into California by Spanish missionaries and used as building material, but since then it has become a highly competitive weed. Sections of the root break off during high water flow and float downstream starting new colonies that crowd out native plants such as cottonwoods and willows. It is not known to provide either food or nesting habitat for native animals. The dense growing nature of this species can grow up to four inches in one day and 30 feet tall into tree canopies. *Arundo* has highly flammable stems making it a fire hazard and its leaves contain noxious chemicals that burn even when green, yet it has fire tolerant roots that can survive a burn. In summary this weed destroys fish and wildlife habitat, creates erosion, increases flooding problems, alters stream flow and diminishes ground water supply.

Individual eradication projects can be funded by working with the local weed management areas to receive grants. Some proven methods of removal

include cut only, root removal or spray only with herbicide such as glyphosate (Roundup® or its aquatic equivalent Rodeo®). The most effective method with less soil disturbance, low risk of spraying nontarget species with herbicide drift and no regrowth is to cut and immediately treat the stump with herbicide by wand or paintbrush applicator. County and Government agencies should be contacted to assure correct permitting is obtained for removal.

The next step in the team's eradication process is to make the public aware of this threat to the farming community. Presentations have been made to groups such as the local Watershed Oversight Committee to spread awareness and get local volunteers to help get rid of *Arundo* in Madera County.

Caligrams...

Delegates from China Ministry of Water Resources Tour Riverside Conservation District

By Paul Laustsen, Area Public Affairs Specialist, Riverside AO

On Monday, August 13, 2001 representatives from the Chinese Ministry of Water Resources came to the Riverside Conservation Center to learn more about conservancy issues in California. **Shelly Lamb, Nghi Diep, Diana Ruiz** and **Kerwin Russell** from the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District educated visitors about irrigation practices, exotic plant removal and other partnership programs with the NRCS. The day began with an informational talk and tour of the conservation center and ended with a trip to Fairmount Park. Park Ranger **Randy Solis** led the group to the park and talked about the ecological management of the area. The group consisted of 14 men and 3 women accompanied by a translator to break the communication barrier.

Many of the visitors from China have backgrounds in engineering, while others are directors of water resources in different provinces of China. They were an enthusiastic group that asked questions regarding our water and soil conservation and showed particular interest in erosion control that can possibly be used in their native China.

NRCS Active at Range Camp 17 Years In a Row!

By Jolene Lau, Area Public Affairs Specialist, Salinas AO

Twelve lucky students got an expense paid adventure to the Elkus Ranch in Half Moon Bay this summer. The annual "Range Camp for Youth" is a week-long session offered to high schoolers in California's Future Farmers of America program by the California Section of the Society for Range Management.

Technical presentations covered erosion control, watershed management, soils, forestry, rangeland-urban interface, and career opportunities. **Richard King** of Petaluma also enlightened the students on holistic management with a focus on guiding our planning to address land, people, and economics. Participating sponsors include California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, U.C. Cooperative Extension, U.S. Navy, and the East Bay Municipal Utility District. Special thanks to San Mateo RCD for hosting this year's event; and to this year's helpers, NRCSers **Ken Oster, Rixon Rafter, Greg Norris** and volunteer **Ted Norris**. Congratulations to **Paul Sparks** of Lancaster, **David Briggs** of Hemet, and **Megan Welch** of Fresno!

Teachers Visit PMC

By Jolene Lau, Area Public Affairs Specialist, Salinas AO

About 30 elementary school teachers participated in the San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation's "Ag in the Classroom." The four-day event included a stop at NRCS's Plant Materials Center in Lockeford where **David Dyer**, PMC manager provided a tour and background of the center and talked about Backyard Conservation. **David Simpson**, Stockton district conservationist, presented the San Joaquin State Soil and discussed how to integrate agriculture into existing classroom activities.

In Honor of...

By Lori Perez, Administrative Assistant, Fresno Area Office

On June 25th the Fresno Area Office and field staff took time to honor some of their dedicated volunteers that not only provide assistance but are an integral part of the NRCS family. Throughout the year, each contributes in a variety of capacities and offer a wealth of expertise that has proven invaluable to NRCS.

Our volunteers have provided assistance to the West Side RCD, field trials, agronomic plantings, project advising, project management, soils training, soils judging, volunteer coordination, computer training, office administration, outreach and more.

In celebration of their contributions, staff gathered to first share in a pot-luck lunch at the Fresno Area Office. Since four of the five volunteers are Area Office NRCS retirees the gathering was more like a gathering of family rather than an official recognition event.

To recognize their contributions each was presented with a token of our appreciation that ranged from Pendleton blankets, a clock or a tee shirt. The presentations were made by **Curtis Tarver**, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in Fresno who expressed our appreciation for a job well done.



Volunteers pose for a picture at the recent Volunteer Appreciation Pot-Luck held at the Fresno Area Office. From left to right are **Red Martin**, **Curtis Tarver**, **Barbara Helton**, **Clarence Finch**, **Joanne Powell**, and **Kim Chang**.

New Steering Committee for Upper Stony Creek Watershed Project

By Lori Metz, Rangeland Management Specialist, Willows SC



This committee, disbanded by landowners in 1997, was reactivated by the Glenn and Colusa County Resource Conservation Districts in March 2001. The committee is comprised of landowners in the watershed and serves to help guide the functions of the PL-566 Project. They provide input on educational needs for landowners, review cost list updates, help resolve conflicts that may arise, and spread the word to boost local involvement in the project.

*Upper Stony Creek Steering Committee Meeting at Stony Gorge Reservoir, May 8, 2001. Attendees (left to right): **Mike Landini**, Chairman; **Bob Bright**; **Keith Carly**, Vice Chair; **Lori Metz**, NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist; **Gary Evans**, Colusa County RCD Director; **Hank Spurlock**, Glenn County RCD Director; **Frank Alexander**; **Nicole Jimenez**, NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist; and **Dan Martynn**, District Conservationist, Colusa.*

Tehama County Students Celebrate Earth Day

By Dave Sanden, Area Public Affairs Specialist, Red Bluff AO



NRCS District Conservationist **Larry Branham** and **George Moran** of FSA explained the benefits of backyard conservation to crowds of Tehama County students during the first ever Earth Day Fair at Evergreen Middle School.

In past years the school hosted educational tours of the Environmental Study Trail and gave away Garden Starter Kits to celebrate Earth Day. This year they wanted to do a lot more, and hundreds of community residents and students responded. The goal of this huge event was to foster environmental awareness.

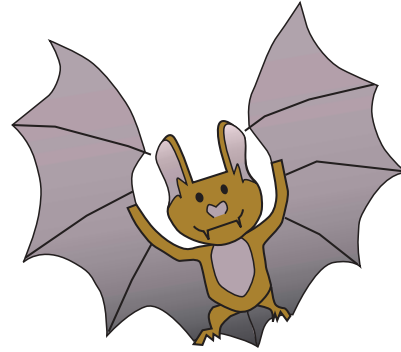
A SUMMER OF FUN



SCEP Workshop 2001 - Students learning about the different hats they'll be wearing as NRCS employees.



"Going Batty for Conservation."



State Fair 2001



Students at the PMC having fun in the sun!



Going in style, until next summer.



PERSONNEL CHANGES

09/20/01

NAME	POSITION	ACTION	GRADE	LOCATION	DATE
Fell, F.	Soil Scientist	Term-Exp of Appt	GS-11	So. Lake Tahoe	04/26/01
Donleavey, R.	Civ Eng Tech	Reassignment	GS-08	Santa Maria	04/22/01
Palmer, E.	Soil Consvs	Promotion-Career	GS-09	Visalia	07/01/01
Svelha, J.	St Tr Engineer	Hire-SCEP	GS-04	Ukiah	04/08/01
Ishii, R.	St Tr Engineer	Hire-STEP	GS-03	Fresno	07/01/01
Bullard, G.	Soil Consvs	Retirement	GS-13	Davis	04/03/01
Cuhaciyan, C.	St Tr Engineer	Hire-SCEP	GS-05	Apple Valley	05/20/01
Obersinner, V.	District Consv	Promotion	GS-11	Greenville	04/21/01
Harben, B.	NRI Team Ldr	Promotion	GS-12	Fresno	
05/06/01					
Olson, P.	Ag Engineer	Promotion	GS-11	Auburn	06/03/01
Bundy, L.	Ag Engineer	Promotion-Career	GS-11	Weaverville	05/06/01
MacLean, J.	St Tr Biologist	Hire-SCEP	GS-04	Davis	06/17/01
Omeara, K.	Ag Engineer	Transfer	GS-11	Rhode Island	08/12/01
Ferruzzi, G.	Agronomist	New Hire	GS-11	Salinas	06/17/01
Lindberg, D.	Admin Asst	Reassignment	GS-07	Davis	05/06/01
Carpenter-Harris, H.	Range Consv	New Hire	GS-05	Eureka	05/06/01
Hatten, T.	Soil Consvs	Resignation	GS-09	Placerville	05/04/01
DeClaro, G.	St Tr Agronomist	Promotion	GS-04	Riverside	05/06/01
Benitez, L.	St Tr Soil Sci	Reassignment	GS-04	Apple Valley	06/17/01
Goldsmith, O.	St Tr Soil Consv	Hire-SCEP	GS-04	Elk Grove	06/17/01
Leonard, L.	St Tr Biologist	Hire-SCEP	GS-04	Redlands	06/17/01
Ball, J.	St Tr Soil Consv	Hire-SCEP	GS-02	Riverside	07/01/01
Murphy, B.	St Tr Range	Hire-SCEP	GS-04	Red Bluff FO	06/03/01
Stinebrink, M.	Soil Consv	New Hire	GS-07	Lakeport	07/01/01
Hall, T.	Resource Cons	New Hire	GS-09	Hollister	06/17/01
Ammel, J.	Agronomist	New Hire	GS-09	Indio	06/03/01
Nugteren, W.	Soil Scientist	New Hire	GS-09	Arcata	07/01/01
Anderson, W.	Range Cons	Promotion	GS-09	Oklahoma	07/01/01
Webb, S.	Stream Team Eng	Transfer fm Navy	GS-11	Somis	07/01/01
Marianito, L.	Soil Cons	Transfer to BLM	GS-11	Redding	07/01/01
Kieta-Farrand, K.	Nat Res Mgr	Resignation	GS-11	LA Urban	06/08/01
Afman, D.	St Tr Soil Consv	Hire-SCEP	GS-05	Santa Maria	06/03/01
Miller, R.	Contract Spec	Promotion	GS-12	Davis	06/03/01
Reed, B.	Soil Scientist	Reassignment	GS-11	Hanford	08/12/01
Contreras, R.	Admin Clk	Hire-STEP	GS-04	Outreach/Fresno	06/17/01
Smith, R.	Civ Eng Tech	Hire-STEP	GS-04	Redding	06/17/01
Vlach, R.	St Tr Range	Hire-STEP	GS-04	Susanville	06/17/01
Rambach, J.	Ag Engineer	Promotion-Career	GS-09	Colusa	07/01/01
Buban, D.	St Tr Engineer	Promotion-SCEP	GS-05	Templeton	07/15/01
Capistrano, J.	Supply Tech	New Hire	GS-05	Davis	07/01/01
McCleery, D.	RC&D Coord	Promotion	GS-12	Jackson RC&D	07/01/01
Peters, R.	State Admin Ofcr	Reassignment	GS-13	Davis	07/15/01

NAME	POSITION	ACTION	GRADE	LOCATION	DATE
Kroschel Jr., D.	Range Conserv	New Hire	GS-07	Fall River	07/29/01
Gabor, J.	Resource Conserv	Conv To CC Appt	GS-07	Madera	07/15/01
Fahnestock, P.	Area Soil Sci	Promotion	GS-12	Apple Valley	07/29/01
Schneider, J.	Soil Conserv	Promotion	GS-11	Stockton	07/15/01
Oster, K.	Area Soil Sci	Promotion	GS-12	Templeton	07/15/01
Russell, E.	Area Soil Sci	Promotion	GS-12	Fresno	08/15/01
Clark, B.	Computer Aid	Hire-STEP	GS-04	Davis	07/15/01
Sims, D.	Ag Engineer	Resignation	GS-11	Susanville	09/16/01
Chavez, E.	St Tr Public Aff	Resignation	GS-03	Davis	07/31/01
Garr, M.	Biologist	Promotion-Career	GS-09	Escondido	08/12/01
Hoobler, K.	Soil Cons Aid	Hire-STEP	GS-03	Bakersfield	08/12/01
Montepagano, C.	St Tr Soil Cons	Promotion	GS-05	Redlands	08/26/01
Nelson, MJ	Soil Conserv	Promotion-Career	GS-09	Modesto	08/12/01
Smith, R	RC&D Coord	Promotion fm FS	GS-12	Yosemite-Seq	07/29/01
Wright, J.	RC&D Coord	Reassignment	GS-12	Ridgecrest	07/29/01
Macon, D.	RC&D Coord	New Hire	GS-12	Auburn	08/12/01
Hansen, A.	St Tr Soil Sci	Promotion-SCEP	GS-05	Arcata	08/12/01
Chavez, E.	St Tr Public Aff	Resignation	GS-02	Davis	07/31/01
Calvert, C.	St Tr Soil Cons	Promotion-SCEP	GS-05	Fresno	08/26/01
Diep, N.	Soil Cons	Resignation	GS-09	Riverside	09/07/01
Evans, P.	Soil Cons	Promotion-Career	GS-09	Placerville	09/09/01
Ishii, R.	St Tr Ag Eng	Conv to SCEP	GS-03	Fresno	08/26/01
Jones, C.	Ag Eng	New Hire	GS-05	Davis	09/12/01
Deitz, F.	Cultural Res Spec	New Hire	GS-12	Davis	08/26/01
Akin, L.	RC&D Coord	New Hire	GS-11	Willows	08/12/01
Johnson, S.	Public Aff Spec	New Hire	GS-07	Davis	09/09/01
Feit, S.	Soil Scientist	New Hire	GS-07	Fresno	09/09/01
Young, A.	St Tr Soil Cons	Resignation	GS-05	Templeton	09/05/01

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS in California

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Davis, California 95616

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